



**WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, June 14, 2004**, for the purpose of holding a stakeholder meeting with the Greenbelt Homes, Inc. (GHI) Board.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. It was held in the Board Room at the GHI Offices.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, and Mayor Judith F. Davis. Councilmember Leta Mach was out of town. Councilmember Konrad E. Herling arrived at 8:10 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Julia Eichhorst, Dorothy Lauber, Sylvia Lewis, Don Hudson, Chuck Hess, Gretchen Overdurff, and Bill Wilkerson, GHI.

GHI Marketing Presentation: The newly revised GHI slide show, which is shown at pre-purchase orientation meetings, was shown. Mayor Davis also noted that Council appreciates receiving the copies of the Communicator and the agendas of board meetings.

Maintenance of City-Owned Open Space: Ms. Eichhorst said some GHI members had brought to the board's attention the condition of the area near 56 Court Crescent. Mr. McLaughlin asked if these were recent complaints, since the City has done a good deal of work there over the last three weeks or so. He said one individual who had complained to the City Council about this earlier had recently come to a meeting to thank the City for its work. He asked to be called if it continued to be a problem in any way. In terms of grass-cutting and fields, he said there is a schedule of 10 days for playgrounds, about the same or "as needed" for ball fields, and 2-3 weeks for other areas. Again, he said if there was a problem, just to call. Mr. Hess noted the area between Crescent and Parkway. Mayor Davis said that area is privately owned. Mr. McLaughlin said the City owns the area down in the vicinity of the underpass.

Maintenance of Inner Walkways: Ms. Overdurff said they would like clarification on what the City intends to do during snowstorms. She said she thought there was once a map and an agreement. There was discussion of the report made to Council on snow-clearing priorities, and Mr. McLaughlin said he would send a copy to Ms. Overdurff. She said they appreciated that what the City could do with walkways depended on the demands of the snowfall but that if they knew the City's priorities, then GHI could develop a complementary plan. She also mentioned that GHI is working with its members to improve trimming on walkways so they will not be obstructed.

Bulk Purchase of Ice-Melt Products: Ms. Overdurff said they have a storage problem for bulk products and thus were buying in bags. She asked if they might buy bulk from the

City. Mr. McLaughlin said if they could benefit on price by piggy-backing, the City would be happy to help, but that the City does not always store much beyond its own needs; thus, depending on the demands, at any given point in the season the City may not be able to share its supply. Mayor Davis mentioned that with the ice of last year, the City had to turn down requests from other municipalities to share, as well. Mr. Putens suggested it might also be worthwhile to see if the City gets a better price than GHI on bags.

Historic District: Ms. Eichhorst said they would appreciate a presentation from City staff on this, in part because in many ways it is a totally new document and many of the cast of characters have changed. She said they are busy through the summer anyway and were thinking in terms of November or early December. She asked they were aware that City staff was not in favor of pursuing this and asked if that was Council's opinion, too; if that were the case, it might not be worth GHI's spending time on. Mayor Davis said Council had received copies of the revised guidelines but had not discussed them. She said the City had always been willing to be supportive of whatever GHI wished to do for itself but had not gotten beyond the question of what, if anything, besides GHI should be included if it went forward. Mr. Roberts said he was still in favor of it and hoped GHI would review it seriously. Ms. Eichhorst also commented that if the revised version is much stricter, there may be less support for it among the membership.

Pepco Undergrounding: It was discussed that there is no realistic expectation of this anytime soon, since it is extremely expensive to retrofit.

Additional Parking at McDonald Field: Ms. Overdurff said a resident had said the City would increase the parking area. It was agreed that there would be problems involving property lines, location, and maintenance. The City is waiting for an overall plan for the field. Mr. McLaughlin said any GHI input on that would be welcome. Mr. Roberts said he thought extending the parking would be a bad idea, since that tends to become a "never-ending intrusion" into a residential neighborhood. The Mayor agreed, adding that the neighbors of the field seemed to be very tolerant of it and even enjoy it as a piece of small town living, which might lose its charm pretty quickly if it expanded.

Trash/Recycling: Mayor Davis commented on upcoming changes, including a requirement to use paper bags for leaves that would be implemented in the spring. Other changes involve placement of trash containers for pick up and access on a hard-surfaced paths. Although the latter changes primarily impact single family houses, there is an access issue at 7 Court Crescent. Ms. Overdurff asked if the City would consider any other alternatives for GHI members other than bagging leaves: e.g., bringing them to a street area for vacuuming. Mr. McLaughlin said that had not worked before because it took up parking spaces and seemed to contribute to a dumping problem.

Zoning for Mini-Storage: Ms. Overdurff said they had talked with the City Solicitor but were waiting to hear back from him. Mr. McLaughlin said he had checked with Mr. Manzi, who said he thought the next step would be for GHI representatives to meet with Park & Planning staff. He told Mr. McLaughlin he thought GHI either should be able to do this as an accessory use under the existing zoning or request an amendment to the zoning ordinance to add a use. Ms. Lewis said they have been told only one non-conforming use is allowed and the GHI office complex is it. Mr. McLaughlin said to call Mr. Manzi to find out whom to call at Park & Planning.

Greenhill/Hillside Outfall Stabilization: It was agreed that Bill Phelan would be asked to do a brief (15-30 minute) presentation on the GHI components of this issue and any other GHI aspects of the lake watershed study, so that the board can consider it with their budget process. They suggested their August meeting would be a good time. A work session would then be planned to deal with it in several months when the City has design plans and can talk about it more specifically. Mr. Wilkerson noted that the GHI Woodlands Committee had planted many hemlock trees in that area.

Anacostia Trails Heritage Area (ATHA) Signage: Mayor Davis explained the purpose of this program and the interest in placing an interpretive panel near the GHI offices that would be similar to the ones the City had placed elsewhere. She said there would be no cost to GHI, and GHI would have approval of what would go on it. Ms. Eichhorst asked that a written request be submitted that could be placed on the agenda of their July meeting for action.

Control of Non-Native Invasives in Woodlands: Mr. Herling had attended part of tonight's Recycling & Environment Advisory Committee meeting, where there was discussion of the use of herbicides. Some people are strongly opposed to any herbicide use by the City; others think that Bill Phelan has adequately reviewed and evaluated the City's practice on this issue. Ms. Eichhorst asked if the City has a plan for dealing with the invasives yet. The Mayor said not yet, and the Advisory Committee on Trees' report is out to other boards for review prior to coming to Council for discussion. Ms. Lewis said GHI had concluded that there is simply no way to reduce the non-native invasive species, which GHI must do because of the Forest Preservation Program, without use of herbicides. Mr. Putens recounted his experience with poison ivy in his area of Greenbelt East.

Mr. Roberts said some people were very upset with the approach GHI had taken with the demonstration area on Hillside. He said people think the herbicides are a bigger problem than the invasives, simply less visible. He said the herbicides also clear both native and non-native species. He said he recognized there was an issue where City property abuts GHI property but that otherwise most of the City's woodlands have little problem. He said the suggestion that Parcel I is going to be overgrown is extreme.

Mayor Davis asked that GHI document or provide maps for which specific areas of City property are of greatest concern to GHI in this regard so that the City can focus on those. Ms. Overdurff said they had walked the areas with Bill Phelan and she thought he knew what they were but that she would send a map and something in writing.

Bill Wilkerson added that the Forest Preserve Task Force was assuming that it should be considering this topic under its charge to develop maintenance plans. He noted that GHI has a five-year plan to eliminate English Ivy from yards. He added that he thought there might be less draconian ways to apply herbicides than the approach taken in the GHI demonstration project.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher

City Clerk